



LANGUAGE POLICY

Guiding Statement for Policy

Internationalism

To enhance the international mindedness of all members of the school community by promoting awareness of intercultural understanding and interconnectedness between the local and global community.

Key School Definitions

Intercultural Learning

To foster an awareness, cultural sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation of one's own culture and the culture of others within our unique ACS (International) community of Singaporean and international learners.

Global Citizenship

Way of living that acknowledges the nature of our inter-connected and multi-cultural world and the need to work collectively, seek understanding, adapt to and adopt global values to build a sustainable and responsible world.

International Vision

Reaching out to the world with foresight and Christian values while having a respect for perspectives and global issues to develop as a responsible global citizen.

International Education

To ignite an international minded community who have a sense of identity, compassion, skills to learn, diverse experiences and can address global issues affecting our communities at a local and international level.

ACS (International) Language Philosophy

"To nurture the academic, social, physical, cultural and spiritual growth of future leaders through creating a strong, vibrant, international community in which young men and women would feel valued and learn understanding, mutual respect, co-operation, friendship and compassion" – **School Mission Statement 1**

We cater for Singaporeans and overseas students who are interested in an international curriculum in a Singaporean context. Our international students currently represent more than 30 nationalities — they contribute richly to our school culture, and help nurture a sense of global mindedness in the school community as a whole. The school's language philosophy is shaped by the unique ACS experience, supporting school policies such as the Intercultural Learning Policy as well as the IBO Programme Standards and Practices (IBO PSP). In order to develop future leaders within its unique intercultural context, ACS (International) has developed a Language Philosophy that aims to:

- Recognise that Singapore as a host country is a multilingual country with four official languages: English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil (Singapore Constitution). English is the most commonly used language in local schools, homes, workplace, government agencies and industry. (*IBO PSP A7*)
- Understand that the medium of instruction and means of communication is English and students for whom English is not a first language are required to develop English proficiency to access the education on offer (Foundational years for Years 1 & 2, IGCSE/FIB/PIB for Years 3 & 4, and IBDP for Year 5 and 6) (*IBO PSP A7 & B1.5.b*)

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- Recognise that language plays an important role in shaping thinking, developing understanding and communicating. All teachers share responsibility for language development and competence as "Every teacher is a language teacher". (Clearly reflected in 'Teaching and Learning Framework' and Unit Plans) *(IBO PSP C1.8 & C3.8)*
- Recognise that administrators, teachers, librarians and other school staff will require professional development in the fields of language learning and teaching, and on how to make sure that the language policy is central to whole-school practice. *(IBO PSP C1.8 & C3.8)*
- Aim to promote internationalism, Intercultural understanding and international-mindedness amongst all stakeholders who bring cultural and linguistic diversity to our community. Hence the school provide opportunities to develop first language, second language or MOE mother tongue wherever possible. *(IBO PSP A7 & B1.5.b)*
- Are aware of and recognise the fact that, for the non-English speakers, there are different language learning experiences and that there is another 'language' process taking place. *(IBO PSP A7)*
- Understand that mother-tongues and other languages can be used to consolidate, reinforce and enhance learning experiences. *(IBO PSP A7 & C3.7)*
- Recognise and respect students' linguistic and cultural heritage and foster the understanding that these are integral to individual identity through celebrating linguistic diversity. *(IBO PSP A7 & C3.7)*
- Ensure that there are practices in place to provide inclusion and equity of access to the full curriculum for all learners including those learning in a language other than their mother tongue e.g. the Bridging Programme, language support for English as well as First language courses (classes or self-study). *(IBO PSP A7, B1.5.b & C3.7)*

ACS (International) Language Profile

The student body at ACS (International) is diverse with approximately 50% of students holding Singaporean citizenship and 50% hailing from overseas. The school has 30+ nationalities on its roll reflecting a wide range of cultural identities, religious orientations, languages, values and beliefs. ACS (International) views intercultural learning and understanding as key to fostering a sense of community and family within its walls. Students at ACS (International) may use a variety of languages other than English when communicating with their peers with the most common being: Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesian, Japanese and Thai.

The diverse staff body at ACS (International) reflects Singapore's multicultural make-up. In addition, a significant number of staff at ACS (International) come from overseas. ACS (International) values high levels of staff collaboration and interaction in order to nurture an effective, healthy and happy working environment. As such ACS (International) sees intercultural understanding as essential to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school.

As a school that accepts Singaporean students, ACS (International) follows government legislation and MOE regulation regarding the Singaporean Mother-tongue programme.

For both students and staff multilingualism is an everyday reality at ACS (International). Celebrating and embracing other cultures through a recognition of linguistic diversity therefore underpins the ACS approach to languages.

Definition of Key Terms at ACS (International)

Language of Instruction: The language of instruction is the language used to teach content and conduct class. At ACS (International) the language of instruction is English except for Foreign language, mother-tongue, first language other than English classes.

Language of Communication: The language used to communicate within the school community (Announcement, staff briefings and meetings, minutes, brochure, assemblies, chapel services, parent

information and parent teacher meetings). At ACS (International), the language of communication is English. The school does recognize that there might be a need to use other languages with parents or guardians who may not be proficient with English.

First Language: This is the language the student is most proficient in. Often but not always this will be the student's native language.

Language acquisition and Second Language(s): Language(s) in which the student is 'less' proficient and has/have been acquired after the First Language. Ability and fluency may vary greatly with some students at beginner level (for example, starting a Spanish class in IGCSE, or Mandarin Ab initio) and other proficient users (For example a student taking IGCSE ESL or French B HL). Second language(s) proficiency may be measured using the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR).

Native Language: The language first learnt by a student and used within the family and close community circle.

Mother-tongue: At ACS Mother-tongue is used to define languages studied in the MOE mother-tongue programme (Chinese, Tamil and Malay).

English as the Medium of Instruction and Means of Communication

- English is the language of instruction at ACS (International) (except other language lessons e.g. Chinese).
- Students are expected to learn, process and express their learning in English.
- All teachers support ESL (English as a Second Language) learners and consider the language needs of all their students when planning. The school recognises that all teachers are language teachers.
- ESL and mainstream teachers collaborate regularly to ensure effective language support to their students, to provide inclusion and equity of access to curriculum.
- The use of English is positively reinforced as a tool that allows high quality education, interaction and collaboration within the ACS community. There is no punishment for students who fail to use English.
- Speakers of languages other than English may use dictionaries and other resources to aid the learning process.

First Language other than English at ACS (International)

Students are encouraged to maintain and to develop proficiency in the use of their first language:

- The School will assist the student in seeking instruction to develop their first language by liaising with outside agencies (e.g. BTTSAL) to ensure provision of the mother tongue ACS (International).
- The School offers IGCSE Chinese as First Language and O level Higher Chinese for students who are well versed in Chinese, so to students in Tamil and Malay, in O level Higher Mother Tongue. The school also allows students who wish to take their own First Language as First Language Examination should they wish to and when these are available.
- At IBDP level provision is made through Language A delivery. This may take the form of formal Language A delivery (Chinese A, Korean A, Japanese A, Vietnamese A). In addition, students may opt for school-supported self-taught languages (SSST). The school has an SSST support staff available and regularly trained (IB workshops).

- Whenever possible, classes are set up to help international students to continue in the development of their first language. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 students taking IGCSE ESL may opt for First Language Japanese or Korean classes (non-IGCSE).
- All staff and students at ACS (International) cultivate an awareness of their linguistic environment and aim, in formal and informal settings, to use the language that is the most inclusive so as not to exclude others.
- Students may draw upon their first language to reinforce academic concepts.
- In case of emergency the School will endeavour to use a student's first language or seek help from someone who speaks the student's first language.

Language Acquisition at ACS (International)

All students at ACS (International), with the exception of students in Bridging, study a second language. For Singaporean student taking the MOE Mother-Tongue course, the mother-tongue language is studied in lieu of a language acquisition course up to Year 4. ACS(International) believes language acquisition is central to its language philosophy for the following reasons:

- We are an international school which encourage multilingualism as a means of improving communication and understanding within the community.
- Foreign language learning as been proved to enhance intercultural understanding and intercultural competences (Byram 2000).
- The study of a foreign language equips students with a range of transferable skills that will enhance their learning experience.
- It is a required component of the IBDP.

All students study at a level that is appropriate to their needs and which challenges and develops their linguistic competence. Students may not study their first language as a language acquisition course.

Mother-Tongue Languages at ACS (International)

- **Singaporean/Permanent Resident Students**

(This part should be read in conjunction with the [Standard procedure for language subject allocation](#))

Singaporean students must study their Mother Tongue language up to the required MOE level. Should a Singaporean student not wish to take their MT language but prefer to study a new language upon enrolment, they should understand that future application to a Singaporean university would not be possible without an official exemption from the MOE. The Mother-tongue languages are Tamil, Mandarin and Malay.

- **Singaporean/ Permanent Resident Students with MOE Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Exemption**

Such students need not study their MTL to the level required by MOE (Ministry of Education) for MTL. However, they all study a second or foreign language.

Their options are as follows:

1. They study MTL in a Beginner's Class e.g. Mandarin Chinese
2. They take up a new foreign language.

- **Non-Singaporean Students**

Those students who are not Singaporean citizens or Permanent Residents (other than those following the Bridging programme) will:

Either:

Continue with the study of a second language already started in a previous school.

Or:

Begin a new, foreign language upon entry at ACS (International)

The Study of Language for the International Baccalaureate Diploma

All students will study language at an appropriate level in order to continue the educational process of linguistic development.

At the point of entry onto the IB Diploma Programme, the School will assess the student's language competence in first and second languages. It is the School's responsibility to place the student on the most suitable and appropriate language course.

Students will study Group 1 language in their strongest language. Any students with the ability to take two Group 1 languages will be considered on a case by case basis (based on availability of resources).

Students having studied English as a Second Language at IGCSE may consider English Language courses in Group 1 or English B (HL) in Group 2. Acceptance onto the Group 1 course is dependent on their IGCSE English result (See Bridging Progression section below). A diagnostic assessment may be conducted to ascertain the student's level of English.

All students in the IBDP must take a second language in Group 2 (language acquisition). Language B may be studied at HL, SL or Ab Initio. For students taking a language A other than English, it is a school requirement that they take Language B English HL.

Students may opt for Language B HL/SL when they have studied the selected language for 3 to 4 years prior to entering the IBDP. Students may not opt for a Language B that was used as a language of instruction in the last 5 years.

Native speakers of languages offered in Group 2 are not eligible for the study of their language in Group 2. In cases where the School is unable to provide their language in Group 1, such students may study their First Language as School Supported Self-Taught (SSST) when it is offered as an assessed language for the diploma.

Students may opt to study a new language at Ab Initio level as long as they have no prior experience of the language or no more than two years of formal instruction. However, if the student is struggling with the language (i.e. failing for a few years) or has specific learning needs, they may have studied the language for a longer period. Singaporean students intending to apply to local universities must check that they have fulfilled all MTL entry requirements before opting for Ab Initio languages.

Due to its Singaporean context and MOE regulation regarding Mother-Tongue programmes, students taking Chinese B SL may opt for an anticipated examination as they are qualified to do so. All Singapore students must take an exam in one of the three national languages and by first year DP they are well qualified to do so.

In all cases, the choice of an appropriate course of language study may only be made after appropriate consideration of the student's past language learning experience as well as their future educational and career plans. Language subject choices will be vetted and students will be provided with appropriate guidance at the point of entry onto the IBDP.

Appendix

The list of MOE Mother-tongue, first, second and Ab initio languages currently offered from Y1 to Y6.

Year	Languages Subjects Offered
1	O level Higher Chinese O level Express Chinese O level Express Malay O level Express Tamil O level Chinese Syllabus B French as a Foreign Language Mandarin as a Foreign Language Spanish as a Foreign Language
2	O level Higher Chinese O level Express Chinese O level Express Malay O level Express Tamil O level Chinese Syllabus B French as a Foreign Language Mandarin as a Foreign Language Spanish as a Foreign Language
3	O level Higher Chinese (1116) O level Higher Tamil (1147) O level Express Chinese (1160) O level Express Malay (1148) O level Express Tamil (1157) O level Chinese Syllabus B (1153) IGCSE Chinese as a First Language (0509) IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523) IGCSE French as a Foreign Language (0520) IGCSE Japanese as a Foreign Language (0519) IGCSE Mandarin as a Foreign Language (0547) IGCSE Spanish as a Foreign Language (0530) Japanese Preparatory Course Korean Preparatory Course
4	O level Higher Chinese (1116) O level Higher Tamil (1147) O level Express Chinese (1160) O level Express Malay (1148) O level Express Tamil (1157) O level Chinese Syllabus B (1153) IGCSE Chinese as a First Language (0509) IGCSE Chinese as a Second Language (0523) IGCSE French as a Foreign Language (0520) IGCSE Japanese as a Foreign Language (0519) IGCSE Mandarin as a Foreign Language (0547) IGCSE Spanish as a Foreign Language (0530) Japanese Preparatory Course Korean Preparatory Course
5	IB Chinese Language and Literature HL IB Chinese Language and Literature SL IB Japanese Literature SL IB Korean Literature HL IB Korean Literature SL IB Vietnamese Literature SL IB Chinese B HL IB Chinese B SL IB French B HL IB French B SL

	IB Hindi B SL IB Malay B SL IB Spanish B SL IB Tamil B SL IB French ab initio SL IB Mandarin ab initio SL IB Spanish ab initio SL
6	IB Chinese Language and Literature HL IB Chinese Language and Literature SL IB Japanese Literature SL IB Korean Literature HL IB Korean Literature SL IB Vietnamese Literature SL IB Chinese B HL IB Chinese B SL IB French B HL IB French B SL IB Hindi B SL IB Spanish B SL IB Tamil B SL IB French ab initio SL IB Mandarin ab initio SL IB Spanish ab initio SL